



# **Creative Age Management Strategies for SMEs in the Baltic Sea Region**

## **Annex 1: Country Studies POLAND**

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More information about the project and its results is available at:  
[www.best-agers-project.eu](http://www.best-agers-project.eu)

## Poland



### Socio-Demographic Situation (Selected Indicators)

Indicator	Poland	Europe (EU27)
Area	312.678 sq. km	4.324.782 sq. km
Population (2007)	38.518.241	495.400.000
Population density (pop. per sq. km)	122 Inhabitants per sq. km	115 Inhabitants per sq. km
Capital	Warsaw	
Form of government	Parliamentary Democracy	
Number of children per woman (2008)	1.27	1.52
Average Age (2007)	37.3	40.3 not EU27, but the average of the ten participating countries

[http://www.ipicture.de/landkarte/landkarte\\_polen.html](http://www.ipicture.de/landkarte/landkarte_polen.html); 20.12.2011

[http://www.ipicture.de/daten/regierung\\_poland.html](http://www.ipicture.de/daten/regierung_poland.html); 20.12.2011

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2010/01/weodata>; 19.12.2011

Poland is a parliamentary democracy, its capital is Warsaw.

The country has about 38 million inhabitants, the sixth largest population in the European Union. With 122 inhabitants per square kilometre, which is a figure about half as high as that of Germany (230 inhabitants per square kilometre), and is slightly above the EU27 average.

With a birth-rate of 1.27 per woman, Poland is at the bottom in the EU comparison. The average age of Poles is 37.3 years. Thus the Polish society is the youngest one in this study.

<b>Average life expectancy at birth (years)</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU27)</b>
(2008) males	71.39	76.03
(2050) males	80.72	83.10
(2008) females	79.92	82.08
(2050) females	86.69	87.87

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

The life expectancy of the Polish society is increasing. The average life expectancy of males at birth was at the level of 71.39 years in 2008. Life expectancy at the level of 80.72 years is projected for 2050. The Polish women are currently 79.92 years old. Their projected life expectancy for 2050 is 86.69.

All Polish values are below the EU27 average. Swedish women had the highest life expectancy of the European women in 2008 (83.14 years) and it is projected for the year 2050 that this value is going to increase to 88.27 years.

<b>Old-age dependency ratio</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU27)</b>
(2008)	19	25
(2050)	56	50

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

The dependency ratio in 2008 in Poland reached the value of 19 %, a ratio of 1:5 among the economically inactive (aged 65 years and older) and the economically active persons.

The expected proportion of the elderly in 2050 - in relation to the proportion of working people - is at the level of 56 %, similarly to Germany, which means a ratio of 1:2. For one employed person there are two unemployed ones, which results an

enormous pressure on the productive population. Thus Poland and Germany have the highest dependency ratio of all countries participating in this study.

<b>Elderly population</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU27)</b>
elderly population (65 years and over) as % of total (2008)	13.5	17.1
elderly population (65 years and over) as % of total (2050)	31.6	28.8

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

The proportion of older Polish population, which is defined as persons aged over 65 years in relation to the total population, amounted to 13.5 % in 2008, which is the lowest value in comparison with the countries participating in this study.

For 2050, the proportion of persons aged over 65 in Poland is forecast at the level of 31.6 %. Only in Germany the proportion of the elderly population is slightly higher and amounts to 31.7 %.

<b>Participation Rate (2008)</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU27)</b>
15 - 64 years old males	70.1	77.8
15 - 64 years old females	56.6	63.4
55 - 64 years old males	45.1	57.3
55 - 64 years old females	20.8	38.2

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

The participation rate of male Poles aged 15 to 64 is in the last place compared to the other BSR states, with 70.1 % in 2008.

The participation rate of Polish women aged 15 to 64 dropped in 2008 in comparison to the other BSE states even extremely: The proportion of Polish women is only 56.6 %. In comparison: The proportion of working Swedish women in this age group amounts to 76.8 %.

45.1% of the male population of Poland aged 55-64 is employed, in the case of women the value is 20.8 %. In comparison: In Sweden it is 76.6 % and 69.8 % respectively.

<b>Actual Retirement Age</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU27)</b>
(2007)	59.3 (legal: 60 f, 65 m)	61.4

Focus-Online, Hutterer, M.: Franzosen arbeiten nur bis 59, 12/08/2010; ref: EU-Commission, Eurostat, Missoc, Ageing Report, dpa

The official retirement age in Poland is 60 for women and 65 for men. The actual average retirement age is much lower and amounts to 59.3 years of age.

<b>Can carry out the current profession with 60 years</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU-27)</b>
(2005)	43.6	58.2
first findings (2010)	49.6	58.7

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

In 2005, in Poland, 43 % of persons under 60 years of age were convinced that they would be able to perform their current profession also at 60 years of age, this contradicts the actual retirement age. Five years later, this figure increased in Poland to 49.6 %.

<b>Work affects the health ...</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU-27)</b>
... mainly negatively (2005)	65.3	35.4
... mainly negatively (2010)	36.4	25.0

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

In 2005, the opinion that work has a negative impact on health was shared by 65.3 % of Poles. In Poland, health is considered "the free time issue." The EU27 average was 35.4 %.

In 2010, Poles looked more optimistically into the future: the opinion that work has a negative impact on health was shared only by 36.4 % of the population.

<b>(very) satisfied with the working conditions</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU-27)</b>
(2005)	78.5	82.3
(2010)	84.8	82.3

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

Poles are satisfied with their working conditions. While in 2005 65 % of the

population were of the opinion that work endangers health, 78.5 % of the population were satisfied with their working conditions. In 2010, this value increased even to 84.8 %. The EU 27 average is at the level of 82.3%.

<b>Participated in the last 12 months at employer-paid trainings</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU-27)</b>
(2005)	26.3	26.1
(2010)	32.8	33.7

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

Participation in company training is low in Poland. 26.3 % of workers reported having participated in training measures within the last twelve months in 2005. In comparison: In Finland the figure was at the level of 52.6 %, and 51 % in Sweden. However, the Scandinavian countries are an exception, which is shown by the EU average at the level of merely 26.1 %. The participation of the European workers in company training is generally low. Example: In Latvia and Lithuania the rate is 22.0 % and 22.7 % respectively.

In 2010, the situation in Poland improved: 32.8 % of workers participated in the company training. Nevertheless, Poland is still in the third to last place in the EU27 comparison before Latvia and Lithuania.

<b>Indicator for Work-Life-Balance</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Europe (EU-27)</b>
Working hours fit well or very well with Family or social obligations**** (2005)	70.6	79.4
Working hours fit well or very well with Family or social obligations**** (2010)	84.9	81.5

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

In the comparison of countries from 2005, the working hours were least compatible with family and social obligations for the Polish employees. In 2010, this value increased to 84.9 %, placing Poland in the midfield.

## General Overview

In comparison to the other EU27 countries in this study, the performance of Poland is relatively poor. Unemployment is high, people decide to go for retirement early, the birth rate is the lowest in Europe.

The reasons for this lie in the history of demographic and cultural development and in the challenging structural changes with which the republic was and is confronted.

Even before the end of the 1940s, Poland, at that time a communist country, experienced a baby boom. In 1955, at the climax of this development, approximately 800,000 children were born, as many as never before in the post-war period.

The baby boomers reached their adulthood in the 1980s and caused a "demographic echo," many births were recorded again.<sup>1</sup>

This led to the assumption that a corresponding "echo of the baby boom" should occur also at the turn of the millennium. When this failed, a debate about the "negative development trends" started.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the 21st century, the echo generation urged into the labour market. This led to a dramatic youth unemployment rate of 43 % in 2003 and 30 % in 2006.<sup>3</sup>

Poland has an employment problem both in the case of the young persons and the older ones. Less than 30 % of all people between 55 and 64 years of age are still officially employed. The actual retirement age was 59 years in 2006. The official retirement age is 65 in the case of men and 60 in the case of women.<sup>4</sup>

In 2010, 72 % of approximately 38 million inhabitants of Poland were in the working age. Scientists predict, however, that this number will decrease significantly in the future. This is confirmed by other sources:

"In Poland, the working age population will be increasing by the year 2010, but it will be shrinking rapidly since then."<sup>5</sup>

Even today, the birth rate in Poland at the level of 1.27 births per woman, is very low. Although the life expectancy is increasing also in Poland, according to the UN forecasts, the population of the Republic in the next two decades will decline to around 36 million, and even to 32 million by the year 2050.<sup>6</sup>

This raises the issue of what Poland is doing in order to keep older people in employment. In fact, the Republic is tackling the problem to a greater extent. Before the actual measures can be presented in this regard, it is necessary to describe what prevents Poles from taking care of their older working-age population:

It is coming slowly into the social consciousness that older workers are estimable as an important resource with the potential and development opportunities. Likewise, it also comes gradually into the consciousness of the older workers themselves. In

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<sup>1</sup> "Die demographische Zukunft von Europa"

<sup>2</sup> Instytut Problemów Współczesnej Cywilizacji 2000; Okólski 2004; Frąckiewicz 2003; [http://www.sozilogie.uni-halle.de/sackmann/docs/abschlussbericht\\_internetvorlage.pdf](http://www.sozilogie.uni-halle.de/sackmann/docs/abschlussbericht_internetvorlage.pdf); 11.12.2011

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.elderly.at/attach/1OESB\\_Good\\_practice\\_in\\_active\\_ageing.pdf](http://www.elderly.at/attach/1OESB_Good_practice_in_active_ageing.pdf); 11.12.2011

<sup>4</sup> "The Demographic Future of Europe"

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cesifo-group.de/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/1196558.pdf>; 11.12.2011

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/konjunktur/laenderanalysen/fuer-polen-gibt-es-noch-einiges-zu-tun/3548766.html?p3548766=all>; 11.12.2011

Poland the age of 65+ is still a synonym of "not capable." Often deficient skills are ascribed to older workers. They are perceived as not efficient, not very resilient and not sufficiently open to innovation. Older workers escape from this form of stigma by withdrawing as soon as possible from the working life, especially since the current status quo of the early retirement policies still offers incentives (i. a. financial ones) for withdrawing from the working life.

[http://www.sozilogie.uni-halle.de/sackmann/docs/abschlussbericht\\_internetvorlage.pdf](http://www.sozilogie.uni-halle.de/sackmann/docs/abschlussbericht_internetvorlage.pdf); 11.12.2011

### **Economic changes have priority**

The year 1989 was the victory of the opposition of Poland and triggered extraordinary demographic changes in the country. As a constitutional democracy with a free market economy, it was the Poland's prime objective to reach the level of the West as soon as possible. For this reasons, reforms were implemented at a rapid pace and without compromise.

In 1994, the application for accession to the European Union placed Poland before a national challenge. It was and still is based on the adaptation of the structures of the Polish economy to the ones of the EU. Poland was extremely productive in its concentration on the transformation processes, but other political and social needs for action were partly neglected.

The GDP of Poland has been rising since 1991. In 2009, which was marked by a global financial and economic crisis, Poland was recorded as the only economy with economic growth. Today the service sector has the share in the GDP of 60%. The agriculture plays mainly a traditional social role of diminishing relevance: About 15% of the agricultural occupations generated only 3% of the GDP. The development of Poland since 1989 brought an increase in living standards particularly to the residents of the cities. But the improvement took place even in rural areas and among farmers, i. a. through the provision of subsidies form the EU: "Within the period of 2007 to 2013, Poland received almost a fifth of the EU Regional Fund and the highest subsidies per capita and per year."

<http://www.kas.de/polen/de/publications/19822>; 14.12.2011

The pace of economic development was inconsistent with the **social and political progress**. This is particularly evident in the labour market. The number of young unemployed, long-term unemployed as well as unemployed in the less developed parts of Poland is high. There is a juxtaposition of unfilled jobs and at the same time persons who seek employment. In addition, the social system is burdened with an estimated number of 1 million of unemployed who work abroad and also obtain unemployment benefits in their home country. Conclusion: In Poland, in terms of socio-political issues, action is only taken when major shortcomings present the need for action.

Moreover, Poles who cannot earn for their livelihood on their own, are supported with

strong flat-rate services. The issue whether these people are actually in need, is not controlled sufficiently. The reason for it is the fact that the competent authorities are often staffed and too sparsely supported financially. The inheritance of unemployment has emerged as a result. Children copy the pattern of life of their parents and live on social benefits. The unreasonable amount of these benefits confirms many in their attitude that work is not profitable.

<http://www.kas.de/polen/de/publications/19822>; 11.12.2011

### **Structural Problems in the Pension System**

A similar difficult condition exists in the pension system. Too many workers still have a choice and are encouraged to seek early pension. The low employment rate constitutes a burden to the viability of the welfare system. In 2010, 14 million workers had to generate contributions for 5.6 million pensioners within the framework of social security financed from allocations.

With the study "Poland 2030", the advisors of the Prime Minister Donald Tusk are currently preparing a report which formulates the tasks which the country is supposed to perform by 2030. These include the challenges posed by the demographic change. Despite the great economic advancement in Poland since 1989, the Republic still has to find many solutions to be able to ensure a solid social and pension system. The labour market and pension reforms have the key functions when it comes to the participation of all population segments in the welfare.

<http://www.kas.de/polen/de/publications/19822>; 11.12.2011

### **The Reform of the Pension System**

The first pension reform was initiated by the newly elected Poland's government in 1997. It was already recognised at that time that the system of pension financing of demographic trends would not withstand. The objective of this reform was to achieve a closer connection between the level of deposits and subsequent payments instead of the common flat-rate benefits. A corresponding law came into force in 1999. A fundamental problem has not been solved until today: For low-income earners, the risk of poverty in old age is very large. The positive aspects are the efforts to pay for a longer stay at work and to motivate employees who do not choose early retirement. However, the following is not successful either:

For certain professional groups the flat-rate benefits were maintained, for example for farmers who were earlier granted a better position by the party. It can be difficult to undo these concessions just because there is still a strong lobby of farmers. Therefore, this professional group still makes low or even no contributions.

Due to the high unemployment rate and in total (too) short duration of employment, the 1999 reform did not succeed in improving the pension financing in a sustainable way. It also failed to discourage early retirement. It extended the possibilities of early retirement and provided only a few incentives to stay longer in employment. This

failure was revised in parts in 2009. The law on employment promotion and the labour market institutions affects employees aged over 50. New features of the law are:

- Employers who employ a worker over 50 years of age, in case of illness, pay only for 4 sick leave days of the employee and no more for 33 days, when the illness occurred after 51 years of age.
- From the 15th day of sick leave, the sickness benefit is paid by the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS).
- Employers who employ a worker over 50 years of age, are exempt from the contributions to the Labour Fund and the Fund for Guaranteed Employee Benefits for twelve months.
- These costs are not incurred by the employers who employ persons who are at least 55 years of age (in the case of women) and 60 (in the case of men).

The Council of Ministers adopted a regulation on the distribution of resources from the Labour Fund to secure the funding and coordination of activities related to the activation of the unemployed.

[http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht\\_Polen\\_01.06.2010.pdf](http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht_Polen_01.06.2010.pdf);  
11.12.2011

The structural change which brought the 1999 reform, despite all the limitations and criticisms, should still be regarded as positive. The trend towards greater personal responsibility of insured employees is indispensable with regard to the future developments described previously.

Further measures are necessary in order to make pensions even more future-proof. The retirement age of women must be adapted to the retirement age of men, and it is necessary to eliminate the rights of individual professional groups.

Equally relevant are the changes in the policy concerning the labour market and health. It is necessary to achieve in particular that all parties act comprehensively and collectively in order to develop integrated strategies and concepts for all areas of activity.

<http://www.kas.de/polen/de/publications/19822>; 11.12.2011

## **Measure of Poland**

Poland, as an EU Member State, must participate in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. The fact is that the employment rate in Poland oscillates around 53 %, whereas the EU average is at the level of 64 %.

This situation brings the issue of "professional activity of older workers" gradually to the public. First reflections appear in newspapers and on television, at conferences

and in the government documents.

The continued reluctance arises from the belief which until recently was understood as unanimous, that the early retirement of persons over the age of 50 is a good response to unemployment. However, now Poland is probably in a position to recognise and address the need for action, owing to high ESF funding.

[http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht\\_Polen\\_01.06.2010.pdf](http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht_Polen_01.06.2010.pdf);  
11.12.2011

"Since 2007 several concerted programmes have been established in Poland in the fields of labour market, education, family policies and others. They are summarised in the **National Strategic Reference Frames**. (Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw, May 2007).

Here are some topics and aims for the active labour market policy.

- Dynamic increase of the transfer between unemployment and work, from inactivity to employment,
- creation and development of effective labour market and social care institutions,
- modernisation of social care systems and labour market in order to improve their functioning,
- promoting a new attitude towards one's job in balance with the human life cycle"

[http://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/WstepDoFunduszyEuropejskich/Documents/NSRO\\_maj2007.pdf](http://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/WstepDoFunduszyEuropejskich/Documents/NSRO_maj2007.pdf);  
09.06.2011

### **Independence as an Opportunity (SMEs)**

In the first six months of 2010, over 200,000 start-ups were created in Poland. The Polish Statistical Office (GUS) reported that these were 30% more than in the first half of 2009.

"Poles would rather be the boss of a small company than unemployed," said Rafał Antczak from Deloitte Consulting.

Most of the newly established companies are small and micro enterprises. This is considered "a subsidiary condition of Poland's economic success." In addition, small and medium-sized enterprises help the implementation of the structural change from a planned to a market economy also in the minds of the people.

Polish companies position themselves in the German market through company takeovers. They use the acquisition of brands and distribution networks, as well as the quality seal "Made in Germany."

<http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/konjunktur/laenderanalysen/lieber-chef-als-arbeitslos/3548756.html>

The Project "**Promoting Entrepreneurship among Persons over 50**" or the so-called "Mature Businessman" is a project representing the increasing independence

of older workers in the SME sector:

The Polish project "**Mature Entrepreneur**," prepared by the Employment Office in Gdańsk, helps workers, job seekers and employees aged 50 to 64 remain in the labour market or find a job again. It is achieved through consultations and providing financial assistance. The objective of this initiative is to encourage people to independence and reduce prejudice in relation to workers over 50. The project participants are encouraged to establish small businesses. For this purpose, they participate in educational measures within the scope of 150 hours and are consulted both in the personal and professional sphere. So Mature Entrepreneur helped find 33 companies which had a positive impact on the local economy in the area of Gdańsk. All the start-ups still exist and some are growing so fast that more full-time jobs were created.

Mature Entrepreneur places training for small and medium-sized enterprises in the foreground. The teaching and research focus with relevant specialisations within the framework of the Bachelor's and Master's programmes is the Cracow University of Economics.

In 2010, this project received the "European Enterprise Award" (EEA) with the title "The Best Human Investment." The price recognises initiatives that support entrepreneurship at the regional level.

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/awards/press/download/eea\\_compendium\\_2011\\_de.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/awards/press/download/eea_compendium_2011_de.pdf);  
11.12.2011

Brochure "Polish Projects in the European Finals 2006 -2010"

Also the **trade unions** respond to the market needs. An example for the support of independence of trade unions is the shipbuilding industry in Western Pomerania.

In December 2009, the Gdańsk "Solidarity" along with the Partners, Pomorska Specjalna Strefa Ekonomiczna Sp.zo.o (Pomeranian Special Economic Zone Ltd.), Gdańska Fundacja Przedsiębiorczości (Gdańsk Entrepreneurship Foundation) and Pomorska Izba Rzemieślnicza Małych i Średnich Przedsiębiorstw (Pomeranian Craft Chamber of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) developed the Project "**Partnership for Entrepreneurship of Employees in the Shipbuilding Industry**".

The Programme was prepared for persons who became unemployed due to their advanced age and poor situation in the Polish shipbuilding industry in the north of Poland and intend to become independent. They are supported through training, business consulting, investment grants totalling up to 10,000 euro and bridging subsidies of up to 300 euro for twelve months. The Programme can be pursued by all the shipyard workers and employees of companies cooperating with the shipyard. The project is co-financed with the resources from the European Social Fund. (Financed from the resources of the HMWVL and the European Union – European Social Fund).

### **Trade union measures for vocational retraining**

Regional trade union centres run programmes of ad hoc training and retraining of the workforce in the region. The training topics will depend on the specifics of the industry in the region or on the situation in a given industry. The trainings are financed by the trade unions as well as employers, and the particular work situation is taken into account.

Example: Solidarity Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) currently offers unlimited professional training for industry welders and forklift truck drivers.

[http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht\\_Polen\\_01.06.2010.pdf](http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht_Polen_01.06.2010.pdf);  
12.12.2011

### **Assistance through the European Social Fund (ESF)**

Of all the EU Member States that benefit from the ESF funds, Poland gets the highest grants in the period of 2007-2013. These grants support the country in the implementation of goals and tasks within the ESF programme "Human Capital." The main objectives of the programme are the employment growth and social cohesion. Other goals include the prevention of social exclusion, employee qualifications and optimisation of management.

Three fields of action are presented briefly.

#### Priority Axis 1: Employment and social inclusion

This priority area concerns the introduction of quality standards in the public employment services and 90% of NGOs and social partners who are active in the field of social and employment services. Training contributes to improving the ability of its staff in the wider implementation of active labour market policies and to promote the activities of NGOs and social partners.

#### Priority Axis 2: Adaptability of workers and enterprises, as well as protecting the health of workers

The objective is the qualification and promotion of adaptability of the labour force by expanding and improving the training and development measures and the development of accreditation systems for trainers.

The health of workers is enhanced by better healthcare and pension programmes, and workers will be assisted in returning to work after an interruption caused by an illness.

#### Priority Axis 6: Labour market accessible to everyone

Active labour market policies to support taking up work and professional development were extended to 45% of the registered unemployed. Targeted support is given to unemployed young people, disadvantaged groups such as women, the disabled and the elderly.

## Human Resources Management

Employers should be motivated to change their attitude to a more positive attitude towards older workers through a specially oriented management of human resources. The potential of older workers should be used increasingly and methods should be developed to keep them in operation. This task naturally requires the motivation of older workers.

"Investor in Human Resources" is a programme of the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy. The title "Investor in Human Resources" is awarded annually to about 40 companies (international and national; SMEs). The winners can compete for the title of "Outstanding Human Resources Management." The organiser is the Institute of Labour and Social Policy.

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/policy/synthesis\\_acc\\_de.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/policy/synthesis_acc_de.pdf); 11.12.2011

## Workplace programmes to encourage older workers

In the period of 2004-2009 a trend towards centralisation increased in Poland; tasks in the area of research, social partnership and coordination with each other in the service for the affected persons were taken over by the self-help organisations. Financial assistance was granted by the EU Structural Funds. The Human Capital Operational Programme was financed in 85% from the EU resources and in 15% by the Polish State.

The Programmes are limited to regions and relate to their companies and industries. The participation in these programmes varies depending on the efficiency and activity of local authorities and employment offices. However, the number of active employees and employer organisations is increasing. Western Poland is one of the regions that develop best. Mainly in the cities, but also in the rural areas, there are many interesting ideas to maintain the employment of older workers and promote knowledge and skills.

[http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht\\_Polen\\_01.06.2010.pdf](http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht_Polen_01.06.2010.pdf);  
12.12.2011

The Programme "**Active Woman**" of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy aims to raise the employment rate of women over 50 years of age. In addition, it should be possible for unemployed women to participate in measures which improve their chances of taking up employment and enable them to start their own business activity. The Project is implemented at the state and the regional level. The Coordination Office is the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy. The executing institutions are the WUPs (Voivodeship Labour Offices ) and PUPs (District Labour Offices).

[http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht\\_Polen\\_01.06.2010.pdf](http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht_Polen_01.06.2010.pdf);  
12.12.2011

The Programme "**Lifelong Learning in the Departments for Labour Market**" is also a programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social. It consists of two projects within the framework of the Transversal Programme for Lifelong Learning (2007-2013):

- Euroguidance Poland

Project Partners: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Department of the Labour Market, Ministry of National Education, National Institution for the Promotion of Vocational Training and the Network of Euroguidance Centres.

The overall objective of the project is to increase the mobility of workers and unemployed persons through relevant professional guidance.

(Funded from the resources of the HMWVL and the European Union – European Social Fund)

- European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network – ELGPN

Project Partners: all the EU Member States, as well as Turkey and Iceland as observers, represented by the social partners and government institutions which are responsible for the development of professional guidance.

The objective of this network is to develop national systems which allow lifelong guidance. In order to achieve this objective, measures were taken in the international cooperation, including thematic seminars and study visits, as well as initiatives with national reach, such as inter-institutional collaboration and dissemination of good practices.

[http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht\\_Polen\\_01.06.2010.pdf](http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht_Polen_01.06.2010.pdf);  
12.12.2011

### Programme "**45/50 PLUS: Solidarity of Generations**"

The programme encompasses measures to boost employment, reduce severity of unemployment and enable persons in non-mobile age. Poles in "the non-mobile age" are those who are in the working age but are not willing to change the place of residence for a new job or to participate in training or retraining. The programme is addressed to women aged 45-59 and men aged 45-64. The program aims also to increase the employment rate of older workers. The current percentage of 28% (2008) is expected to increase to 40% in 2013. In 2020, it should be at the level of 50%. In particular, employers should be encouraged to employ preferably the elderly.

For this purpose, employers are exempt from contributions to the Labour Fund and the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund. They also receive, i.a. travel allowances to be paid to employees.

Companies which wish to claim such assistance, must offer works with high strain level (noise, extreme temperatures, etc.) to older workers. Also it is necessary to

improve the health care in order to maintain the working capacity of employees of over 50 years of age. Prevention measures must be taken to help prevent the reduction in production capacity due to poor health. The programme also requires measures which are used in the education of people aged 45+. It is necessary to develop a system which allows employee self-examination of professional and general skills, e.g. the Internet, in the centres for career planning, as well as employment offices. Training vouchers, and programmes for scholarships or training programmes are provided. Older workers should also receive access to the so-called job coaching. Employers who set up a training fund or a separate account for training, may apply for the reimbursement of direct costs of employee training from the Labour Fund.

NAP of Poland, 2004, pp. 34

[http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht\\_Polen\\_01.06.2010.pdf](http://www.dgb-bildungswerk-hessen-demographie.de/upload/dokumente/Lnderbericht_Polen_01.06.2010.pdf);  
12.12.2011

### **"National Health Program 2006-2015"**

"A specific health challenge is supporting active ageing and reducing the early retirement among professionals. An additional cause for low employment indicators of older persons and professional absenteeism is to a large extent the poorer health condition of Poles when compared to that of other EU inhabitants. In this respect an important role will be modernising the health care system. The basis of this will be to prevent health risks by assuring occupational safety and employee's health and by filling gaps in the health infrastructure – particularly in the context of the standards and accessibility of offered services. In tackling these challenges and addressing the need to improve and sustain a healthier population, priorities for the health sector in Poland are given in its National Health Program 2006-2015. Overall, the health sector will benefit from direct and indirect investment under the NSRF strategy, the 16 ROPs and various national OPs from interventions co-financed by ERDF, ESF and CF (see Tables 3- 4).

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/health\\_structural\\_funds/docs/info\\_sheets/pl.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/health_structural_funds/docs/info_sheets/pl.pdf); 11.12.2011

### **Further outstanding projects and good practice**

A European Enterprise Award (EEA) was awarded for the "**Construction Training Programme for the Unemployed**" in 2010. This example of responsible and inclusive entrepreneurship in collaboration with the District Employment Office in Nysa provides a simultaneous elimination of the problem of unemployment on the one hand, and prevail the housing shortage on the other hand: Long-term unemployed will be trained as skilled construction workers who build social housing, e.g. for single mothers.

"Winning the EEA has contributed directly to the promotion of our project. Our system for the construction of social housing and the simultaneous training of the

unemployed is now strongly supported by the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. In addition, we permanently provide information to local and state authorities in the EU who wish to implement similar projects."

Kordian Kolbiarz, Construction Training Programme for the Unemployed, Poland

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/awards/press/download/eea\\_compendium\\_2011\\_de.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/awards/press/download/eea_compendium_2011_de.pdf);  
12.12.2011

Nidzica Development Foundation (NIDA) established the "**Pottery Village**" in 2007 as part of the "Towards the Polish model of social economy-building new Lisków" project under the EU EQUAL program. It is an innovative social enterprise, which promotes and develops entrepreneurship among the unemployed rural population. The project offers ideas for extra-agricultural economic activities, based on vanishing traditional crafts and customs. The result is the development of products and services, under one trade mark – from pottery, tailoring, handmade paper production, agro-tourism and ecotourism to restoration of antique houses. Of the 108 unemployed people who took part in the project, 45 found employment. The project has been replicated in other regions.

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/best-practices/database/SBA/index.cfm?fuseaction=practice.detail&gp\\_pk=6430&](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/best-practices/database/SBA/index.cfm?fuseaction=practice.detail&gp_pk=6430&); 11.12.2011